

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



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Environmental Assessment Completed for Wildlife Center and Visitor Services Facilities at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that it has prepared and released the final environmental assessment and decision documents evaluating the effects associated with a range of alternatives to provide a wildlife center and related visitor services facilities as well as the administration of affiliated programs on the Steinborn Unit of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge located near Sherwood, Oregon.

The proposed action, Alternative B, was chosen because it best satisfied the purpose of and need for the project; it went farther to minimize adverse effects to the environment; and it ensured compatibility with purposes for which the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge was established and with fulfillment of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This alternative included construction and implementation of programs for visitor service facilities resulting in a medium range of capital investments when compared with the no action alternative and other action alternatives.

Based upon a review and evaluation of the information contained in the environmental assessment as well as other documents and actions of record affiliated with this proposal, including public comments associated with all other documents, the Service determined that the proposed action would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

To request a copy of the final environmental assessment and the finding of no significant impact or for further information regarding the proposed action, contact Ralph D. Webber, Refuge Manager, by mail at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, 16507 SW Roy Rogers Road, Sherwood, Oregon 97140 or by telephone at (503) 590-5811.

Prior to preparing the final environmental assessment, the Service held two public meetings on May 21, 2003, seeking comment to identify and further define potential effects of the proposed action/preferred alternative and other alternatives. Comments could be provided at the public meetings or submitted in

writing within a 45 day period of time following release of the draft EA which lasted from May 8 through June 21, 2003. No written comments were received from the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde, federal or state agencies, non-government organizations, or the general public. Detailed notes recorded from the public meetings are included in Appendix D of the environmental assessment, which capture comments and discussions with individuals in attendance.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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